NATIONAL REGISTER LISTED

JUN 2 6 2008

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A) Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-9000a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property				
Historic name Other name/site number	Agra Lake and Park			
2. Location	**************************************			
Street & number 1/4 City or town Agr State Kansas Code k		ge of Agra  Code 147	not for publication vicinity Zip code 67621	
		0000 117	215 0000 07 021	<del></del>
request for determination Historic Places and meets the meets does not meet nationally statewide Patrick Zoliner, Deputy State Kansas State Historical State or Federal agency and	Inder the National Historic Preser of eligibility meets the document of procedural and professional register criteria. I read to locally. (  See continuation of the Historic Preservation Officer Society  Description of the National Historic Preservation of the National Historic Preservation Officer Society  Description of the National Historic Preservation Officer Society	ation standards for register purements set forth in 36 Cecommend that this proper sheet for additional comm	ring properties in the Nation CFR Part 60. In my opinion, ty be considered significant ents.)	al Register of the property t
4. National Park Service Certi	Singline.			
I herby certify that the property is	gister eet. National eet the	ignature of the Keeper		Date of Action

Agra Lake and Park Name of Property		Philips County, Kansas County and State			
5. Classification					
Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)	Category of Property (Check only one box)	Number of Resc (Do not	Resources within Property on ontinclude previously listed resources in the count.)		
private public-local public-State public-Federal  Name of related multiple property li (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a	building(s) district site structure object	5 1 3 0 9		Noncontributing  iotal  outing resources previo	sites structures objects
New Deal-era Resources of Kansas					0
6. Function or Use					
Historic Functions (Enter Categories from instructions)			ories from instruc	·	
Recreation and Culture: Outdoor	Neoreation	Norvac	·	re: Outdoor Recreatio	
7. Description					
Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)		Materials (Enter categories from instructions)			
Other: WPA Park Style	·	Foundation: Sto	one: Limestor one: Limeston		
	·	Roof: Wood: S	Shingle		Martin Control of the
		Roof: Wood: S	Shingle		

Agra Lake and Park	Phillips County, Kansas			
Name of Property	County and State			
8. Statement of Significance				
Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "X" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register	Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)			
A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history	Government  Recreation & Culture  Archeology			
☐ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.	·			
C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.	Period of Significance			
D Property has yielded, or likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.	1934-1938			
Criteria Considerations (Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)	Significant Dates			
Property is:	1934-1938			
A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.				
B removed from it original location.	Classificant Dames			
C a birthplace or grave.	Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)			
D a cemetery.	N/A			
☐ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.	Cultural Affiliation			
<ul> <li>☐ F a commemorative property.</li> <li>☐ G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years</li> </ul>	N/A			
	Architect/Builder			
Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more	KS Emergency Relief Committee; Civilian Conservation Corps:			
continuation sheets.)	Works Progress Administration			
9. Major Bibliographical References				
Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form or	n one or more continuation sheets.)			
Previous documentation on file (NPS):  preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested previously listed in the National Register previously determined eligible by the National Register designated a National Historic Landmark recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #	Primary location of additional data:  State Historic Preservation Office Other State agency Federal agency Local government University Other Name of repository:			
recorded by Historic American Engineering	Agra City Office, Agra, KS, Phillips County Library, Phillipsburg			

Record #\_\_\_\_

Agra Lake and Park	Phillips County, Kansas
Name of Property	County and State
10. Geographical Data	
Acreage of Property 35 acres	
UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)  1 1	3     1    4    8    9    2    3    0    4    4    0    1    1    5    0  Zone
11. Form Prepared By	
11. Form Frepared by	
Name/titleLyndi Bell, Agra City Clerk	
Organization City of Agra, Lake Committee	Date
Street & number 222 Main Street, POB 37	Telephone (785) 638-2811
City or town Agra	State Kansas Zip code 67621
Additional Documentation	
Submit the following items with the completed form:	
Continuation Sheets  Maps  A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's loc  A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acre	
Photographs Representative black and white photographs of the property.	•
Additional items (Check with SHPO or FPO for any additional items)	
Property Owner	
	*.
Name City of Agra	
Street & number 222 Main Street, POB 37	Telephone (785) 638-2811
City or town Agra	State Kansas Zip code 67621

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16) U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503

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Agra Lake & Park Phillips County, KS

#### NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

Agra Lake (c. 1934-1936) lies one-quarter mile north of Kansas Highway 36 on the west edge of Agra in Phillips County, Kansas. The current property boundaries include 35 acres. An earthen dam and spillway were built by the Civilian Conservation Corps starting in March of 1935 after permission and plans were obtained from the Emergency Relief Committee in 1934. Surrounding park space and buildings were built by the Works Progress Administration by 1936 out of local materials including limestone and other local materials.

Two roads lead into the east edge of the park – Kansas Avenue and Southern Avenue. The primary entrance is via Kansas Avenue. The entrance is evidenced by **two stone monuments** that flank the gravel road. A cast iron sign on one of the monument reads: Erected by Works Progress Administration and City of Agra AD 1936.

Five buildings were built for recreational purposes out of local limestone with hand-hewn heavy wooden beams from local timber. There are two shelter houses, a bathhouse, and two privies. There were other recreational facilities — many no longer extant — that included a windmill, several places for croquet and horse shoes, numerous tables and ovens, and a "Children's Play Area" with swings, slide, and sand box. Also, there was a tennis court with a clay base. Although none of these features still exist except for the five buildings, the clay base for the tennis court has been discovered under layers of dirt.

The West Shelter House is a one-room stone building measuring 30' x 24' with an open-air concrete deck on the east side measuring 11' x 30'. The deck is encircled by 30" tall limestone wall that opens to a set of concrete steps. The gable roof is tin and features exposed rafter ends. Each gable end is defined by a limestone chimney - one on the north and one on the south. The corners of the building feature a rough quoining decorative element. A wood frame shed-roof addition measuring 11' x 14' is on the west side of the building. The interior of the shelter house is comprised of a single open room with exposed rafter beams, stone walls, and a concrete floor. The two ends of the room feature large open fireplaces. There are two window openings with wood frames on the west elevation. Just off the east deck is a trapshooting court with concrete walkway/dividers facing southeast.

The **Southeast Shelter House** is a one-room stone building measuring 16' x 25' with one limestone fireplace inside on the north end. The gable roof is tin and features exposed rafter ends. The corners of the building feature a rough quoining decorative element. The interior of the shelter house is comprised of a single open room with exposed rafter beams, stone walls, and a concrete floor. There are window openings with wood frames.

Located near the Kansas Avenue entrance, the **Bath House** is a two-room stone building measuring 42' x 13'6". The cross-gable roof is partially covered with wood shingles and features exposed rafter ends. There are horizontal openings in the walls of the east and west elevations directly beneath the rafter ends to provide ventilation. The primary entrance is on the east side of the building through a small, extended

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Agra Lake & Park Phillips County, KS

front-gable wing. At the entrance is a plaque reading: Erected by Works Progress Administration and City of Agra AD 1936. The building is essentially divided in half with five changing booths on one side for men and five on the other for women. The east booth is 9'6" and still has built-in stone benches all along the walls and steel pipes that used to hold the dividers for the booths. There are two west exists with a stone privacy wall 5'6" x 5' wide. The east entryway is 4' deep x 8' wide. The roof used to have a cupola. The bathhouse faces southwest and once overlooked a sand beach.

Located on the west side of the lake, the **two privies** are one-room stone buildings each measuring 10' x 10'. They feature identical construction – a single centered entrance and front gable roof covered with wood shingles. Like the bathhouse, the privies feature a single horizontal opening beneath the rafter ends to provide ventilation. The roof of the south privy is gone leaving only the stone portion of the building standing.

Agra Lake's **earthen dam**, located along the lake's southern edge, is approximately 40' high by 200' long. Once clear of vegetation, several trees have grown up along the dam. These trees were recently removed and much of the vegetation was cleared to reveal the original dam structure. The original capacity of the lake was 143 acre-feet. The city has recently received new water rights to be able to retain 57 acre-feet of water. The lakebed is currently dry and awaiting restoration. Although overgrown, the spillway is located at the park's northwest corner.

An historic map of the lake and park suggests the degree to which the landscape was designed. Many of the plantings remain evident on the current landscape. Ongoing work at the park site has uncovered a number of interesting features including curbing and gutters near the earthen dam and clay tennis courts at the northeast end of the park.

Inventory of Resources

<u>Five Buildings</u>: 2 shelter houses, 1 bathhouse, 2 privies Three Structures: 1 earthen dam, 2 entrance markers

One site: the park/lake site

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Agra Lake and Park Agra, Phillips County, KS

#### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

## **Summary**

Agra Lake (c.1934-1936) is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its historical association with the New Deal, the Kansas Emergency Relief Committee (KERC), the Civilian Conservation Corps, and the Works Progress Administration (WPA). This recreational resource represents the government work programs of the New Deal-era. The property is also being nominated under Criterion D for its potential to yield information through archeological investigation. This nomination is part of the "New Deal-era Resources of Kansas" Multiple Property Submission.

### Elaboration<sup>1</sup>

## Kansas Repsonds to Hard Times - Kansas Federal Relief Committee

On July 23, 1932, two days after President Hoover signed the Emergency Relief and Construction Act, Governor Harry H. Woodring appointed the Kansas Federal Relief Committee (KFRC) to oversee state relief efforts and to distribute funds made available to the state under Hoover's act. In a ten-year retrospective report, the Committee recalled the start of federal relief in Kansas. "The RFC allotted a total of \$450,000 in loans to the State of Kansas for the period October 16, 1932 to November 16, 1932. On October 16 the Kansas Federal Relief Committee mailed out more than \$58,356.59 to 55 counties, to be used for work relief wages on approved projects."

The KFRC divided the state into 11 districts, each supervised by a committeeman. The KFRC then asked each county to create a three-person County Federal Relief Committee (CFRC) to be responsible for distributing the aid and making applications to the state KFRC for the federal money in the districts they represented. The RFC money, which came in the form of loans, could only be used to supplement, not to replace, local, state and private contributions. Moreover, the loans had to finance day labor, which could not exceed 30 hours a week per person.<sup>4</sup>

While the majority of funds allocated under the ERCA were loans, \$322,224,000 was authorized nationwide for "emergency construction of certain authorized public works." The "authorized works"

<sup>4</sup> Fearon, 161-162.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The following historic context regarding the Kansas Emergency Relief Corporation (KERC) and the Works Progress Administration is included in Elizabeth Rosin's "New Deal-era Resources of Kansas" Multiple Property Document, filed at the Kansas State Historic Preservation Office, Topeka, Kansas: p. E-3-4; E20-22.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Kansas Emergency Relief Committee, <u>Public Welfare in Kansas: 1934</u>, KERC Bulletin No. 289, (Wichita, KS: McCormick-Armstrong Company), 8. Also see Peter Fearon, "Kansas Poor Relief: The Influence of the Great Depression," <u>Mid-America: An Historical Review</u>, 78 (Summer 1996): 139-179.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Kansas Emergency Relief Committee, <u>Public Welfare Service in Kansas: A Ten Year Report, 1924-1933</u>, KERC Bulletin No. 127, (Topeka, KS: n.p.), 11.

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Agra Lake and Park Agra, Phillips County, KS

included the Nurses' Quarters at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, which received \$60,000.<sup>5</sup> It is unclear if the dollars appropriated funded any additional "authorized" projects in Kansas.

## Works Progress Administration in Kansas

Through the WPA, Kansas realized many new public building and recreational facilities. Between July 1, 1935 and June 1, 1939 the WPA either built or improved 619 buildings in the state. That figure includes 36 administrative buildings, 16 auditoriums, 45 barns and stables, 58 community buildings, 59 dormitories, three fire houses, 35 garages, 12 gymnasiums, two hospitals, three jails and reformatories, ten other institutional buildings, seven libraries, 142 schools, 52 stadiums, and 16 warehouses. In addition, there were 121 WPA recreational facilities, including 59 athletic fields, 91 parks, five fairgrounds, 92 playgrounds, 40 swimming and wading pools, 14 band shells, five outdoor theaters, and 140 golf courses, tennis courts, handball courts and horseshoe courts.

In 1939, Clarence Nevins, the state WPA Administrator, commended the people of Kansas. He observed,

"Your attention is called to the fact that practically all of the projects in Kansas have been sponsored by your local governments, and we take this opportunity to commend the counties, the cities, boards of education and other local governmental units in the State for the high type of projects submitted to this agency..."

Nevins concluded by commenting that in June of 1939 there were roughly 30,000 Kansans on the WPA rolls. He observed that over 47 percent were employed on highway or road and street projects; seven percent on public buildings; nine percent on recreational buildings; five percent on utility projects; three percent on road conservation projects; and two percent on airport and airway projects.<sup>7</sup>

### Agra Lake and Park History

Agra (population 306) is located in eastern Phillips County in north-central Kansas twelve miles east of Phillipsburg, the county seat. The county borders the Kansas-Nebraska state line. It was first settled in 1888 and was incorporated in 1904. By 1910, the town had a population of 347 and was a stop on the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railroad.<sup>8</sup>

This nomination includes the dam built through the KERC using plans from the Kansas State Department of Agriculture Division of Water Resources in 1934-1935 and five recreational buildings and a stone entryway built by the Works Progress Administration in 1936. This project brought much needed water

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Frederick E. Hosen, ed., <u>The Great Depression and the New Deal: Legislative Acts in Their Entirety (1932-1933) and Statistical Economic Data, (1926-1946)</u>, (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland and Company, Inc., 1992), 16, 28.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Works Projects Administration, <u>Federal Works Agency</u>, (Topeka, KS: n.p., 1939), 1, 10. Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, KS. This document provides only aggregate numbers of projects. While it is illustrated by photos of selected projects, there is no comprehensive list of projects for Kansas communities.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Eric Foner and John A. Garraty, <u>The Reader's Companion to American History</u> (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1991), 1168.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Frank Blackmar, Kansas: A Cyclopedia of State History, vol. 1 (Chicago: Standard Publishing Co., 1912), 32.

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Agra Lake and Park Agra, Phillips County, KS

and jobs to a drought-blighted area. The land was purchased by the City of Agra at a cost of \$3,000 and the Federal government spent \$30,000 for the Agra Lake Project.

In 1934, four men from Agra - L. E. Womer, Eldon Walker, Lee Munyon, and Perry Sapp - went to Topeka to speak to state government authorities about participating in a New Deal-era program to have a water conservation dam built in town. A site was chosen for its natural ability to collect water and the land was purchased from Mel Hamilton and Mike Nugent. The purchase of land for the lake project was put to a local vote on August 29, 1934. The public vote approved the \$3,000 land purchase, which set into motion plans for the lake's construction. The project was slowed during negotiations with the Rock Island Railroad Company, which owned the land immediately north of the proposed lake. The *Agra Sentinel* announced the progress of discussions between the city and the railroad company:

The [Rock Island] Railroad Company has approved the project, under the condition that the City builds a protective dike or dam for their fill. This fill, or bern as it is called, will be built along the side of the railroad embankment for a distance of 600 feet. It will be about five feet high and ten feet through. This will call for a great deal more labor and will cost the state about \$3,000. The Agra lake project would undoubtedly have been a failure but for the support of the citizens and the untiring efforts of the city officials. At the special election giving the counsel authority to go ahead with the project, there were only sixteen votes cast against the questions. 9

Construction on the dam began in October of 1934 and was completed in March of 1935. The *Agra Sentinel* kept locals apprised of the progress:

Workmen started Monday morning digging out trees, mowing fences, and clearing the ground for the dirt work to start. Perry Sapp, resident overseer of the project, was notified Sunday evening that work would start Monday. He got out that night and passed the good news around among the men to report for duty. That's the good news that many of them have been waiting to hear for some time.<sup>10</sup>

In all, the dam-building project took six months and 100 men with teams of mules and horses to complete this task. The first phase of the project was completed in March of 1935, and work stopped while community leaders waited for approval of the landscaping phase:

Work on the \$20,000 Relief Project, just west of the city, ended last Thursday. No other work is under way at present until the Relief bill up before Congress is passed on. The city officials are working to get a new project thru for the landscaping and beautification of the park. The completion of the dam was made into somewhat of a celebration.

<sup>10</sup> Agra Sentinel, 16 October 1934.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Agra Sentinel, 19 September 1934.

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Agra Lake and Park
Agra, Phillips County, KS

Members of the Chamber of Commerce and any other citizen of the city were invited down to the cook shack for dinner, and there weren't many that refused the invitation. The cooks, Ferguson and Shultz, did themselves justice in the preparation of the soup. The pies were baked by Mr. Herr. After the meal Mr. Keckley passed the cigars and everyone enjoyed a regular picnic. Many of the county relief agents were down from Phillipsburg, and also County engineer, Hoffines, and the Commissioner. Agra now has its dam. All we need is the water, and it has rained in Phillips County, and when it does, we'll have the lake. 11

Barely two weeks later, locals received word that the funding for the proposed landscaping and beautification project had been approved by state and federal officials:

The landscaping plans for the park project at the Agra lake have been drawn up in Topeka and has been submitted to the city and county officials met with their approval. The opinion now is that work on the new project will start sometime next week. This will give employment to the relief workers for three months or better. Here is a list of the improvements that the plans call for: the construction of 10 ovens and tables, 2 shelter houses, a bath house, tennis courts, croquet courts, horse shoe pits, a children's playground, and a sand beach. The south slope of the dam is to be planted to Bermuda grass and 480 trees are to set cut. The park includes about 35 acres, and the lake, when full, will cover half of that area. 12

Although many of these amenities and features are no longer extant, the park's historic site map confirms the newspaper reports. WPA workers spent three months building two shelter houses, one bathhouse, and two privies out of native limestone. The buildings are still extant, yet need extensive rehabilitation. The lake was stocked with fish in the fall of 1935 and the site officially opened for recreational fishing. The water at that time covered 17 acres in the center of a 35-acre park.

Clair Myers, a native of Agra, was caretaker of Agra Lake prior to enlisting in the U. S. Navy on January 1, 1940. Myers was one of two Phillips County men killed in action when Japan bombed Hawaii's Pearl Harbor. He was a signalman on the USS West Virginia and was probably on deck at the time of the attack. His body was recovered and is buried at Leavenworth, Kansas, because his mother could not afford to have him buried locally. The City of Agra would like to honor his memory at the lake in some way.

Locals have many happy memories of time spent picnicking, fishing, and swimming at the lake and of friends and family participating in the building process. The lake and park had seen its heyday come and go by the mid-1950s. The site fell into disrepair and was primarily used by local Boy and Girl Scout

<sup>11</sup> Agra Sentinel, 20 March 1935.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Agra Sentinel, 3 April 1935.

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Agra Lake and Park Agra, Phillips County, KS

groups. The lakebed eventually dried up and for many years was used as a dumping ground for tree limbs, tree stumps, and scrap brush. The City of Agra is now working to clear and restore the site.

Criterion D Significance

This property has the potential to yield information about the early 20<sup>th</sup> century historic period through archeological investigations. Of particular archeological interest are the two extant privies on site. With the use of the use of a historic map of the site from the 1930s, archeological investigations could yield important information.

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Number 9 Page 8

Agra Lake and Park Agra, Phillips County, KS

#### **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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Section Number 10 & Photos Page 9

Agra Lake and Park
Agra, Phillips County, Kansas

### UTM COORDINATES, CONT'D

5. 14: 489310 E / 4400750 N

6. 14: 489020 E / 4400770 N

7. 14: 489030 E / 4400930 N

### VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The Agra Lake and Park is located in Section 28, Township 3, Range 16 in Phillips County, Kansas. It is one-quarter mile north of Kansas Highway 36 on the west edge of Agra.

Beginning at the stone main entrance gate located where Kansas Avenue enters the park, the boundary is established by going left (south) on the park's primary gravel road. Continue around the lake in a clockwise manner. Boundaries shall extend outside the roadway 100 feet to incorporate buildings and features not inside the roadway. The north boundary of the lake is defined by the property line. Thirty-five acres are included within the boundaries.

#### **BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

The nomination includes the parcel historically associated with Agra Lake and Park.

## PHOTOGRAPIC INFORMATION

Property Name: Agra Lake and Park Location: Agra, Phillips County, KS

Photographer: Sarah J. Martin Date: November 1, 2007

Location of Digital Images or Negatives: KS State Historic Preservation Office

Photo 1: North entrance into the park, facing W

Photo 2: Plaque on east wall of bathhouse recognizing WPA efforts to erect park in 1936

Photo 3: Overall view of lakebed with dam at left, facing NW

Photo 4: Bathhouse, east elevation, facing W

Photo 5: Bathhouse, southwest corner, facing NE

Photo 6: Bathhouse, interior, facing W

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Agra, Phillips County, Kansas

South Shelterhouse, southwest corner, facing NE Photo 7: South Shelterhouse, interior rafters Photo 8: Photo 9: South Shelterhouse, interior fireplace Photo 10: North Shelterhouse, overlooking the lakebed, facing NE North Shelterhouse, southwest corner, facing NE Photo 11: North Shelterhouse, east elevation, facing W Photo 12: Looking out over lakebed and dam from North Shelterhouse, facing SE Photo 13: Photo 14: North Shelterhouse, interior fireplace Two stone outhouses, facing SW Photo 15: North stone outhouse, facing N Photo 16: Photo 17: South stone outhouse, interior

